

in his district he heard some of these same problems, some of the same complaints. And that is why we really need to reauthorize the bill to fix those problems.

I have been here now almost 16 years, and I have yet to see a perfect bill. And when a bill is passed, by the time it goes through the process here and finally is passed and signed into law, and then the regulators get their shot at it, write the regulations, and then by the time it is implemented throughout 50 States across this great country, it doesn't necessarily finish up the way you started out or even to achieve the goals that you had.

And so we have a process where every 5 years on our committee we look at the bill again and we go through a reauthorization process, and say, what did we do wrong? What can we do to fix this? What can we do to make it better?

And you brought up the point, special needs students. Definitely something needs to be done there. I remember visiting a school in my district and going into a special needs class and seeing a student there that was carried in on a gurney. And the teachers, the caregivers there that day spent their time just making sure that the child is given the things that are needed for life; they fed him through a tube. There wasn't much education going on there. I think that was a very important program, but maybe it should be considered a help program to give the parents a little relief at that time. But, to say that that child is going to learn to read, common sense would dictate that is not the fact. So, we have a 3 percent waiver for some of those students. Maybe that should have been larger. But that is what we addressed through the reauthorization, and that is why it is very important we get that done.

I would like to yield now to the gentlelady, Mrs. FOXX, who has been a teacher, been a college administrator, and done a lot of things in education.

Ms. FOXX. I want to thank the gentleman from California for his leadership on this special order tonight, and thank him for his leadership on the Education Committee as chairman and now as ranking member.

I grew up in the mountains of North Carolina in a house with no electricity and no running water, with parents with a sixth grade and ninth grade education. My husband grew up in a similar situation, both his parents totally illiterate. But we both give credit for the success that we have had in life to public school teachers and principals who took an interest in us when we were in school and encouraged us to utilize our talents by staying in school and by going on to college. So I in no way disparage the role of teachers or the role of education in our society. In fact, I trumpet it because it has been so important to me. And I spent most of my life working in education, as the gentleman from California said, and it

has been a wonderful opportunity for me.

However, I have great concerns about the role of the Federal Government in education in our country, and I will continue to express those concerns because I remember very well my own excellent education in a county that had very little money. The school buildings weren't wonderful, we had almost no science lab, but we had excellent teachers again who cared about the students. And I would put up that education against anything that is happening in the country today.

Now, I am happy to serve on the Education and Labor Committee. And last year, when talks began in the committee on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, I did what I often do, and that is to look at the genesis and the history of the legislation. And it was a real revelation to me at the time that No Child Left Behind legislation is simply the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, called ESEA by people in education, which was created in 1965 by President Johnson in the midst of the war on poverty. Most folks are unaware that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was in fact the seventh reauthorization of this 1965 legislation. So when you hear it talked about, very few people ever make that connection.

Now, I heard a lot of criticism of No Child Left Behind before I was elected and after I was elected. And so one of the things that I did last year in my district was to have a forum with parents, teachers, and administrators about their concerns with No Child Left Behind; and the people who came to that forum gave me a lot of information that has been very helpful to me in helping to formulate what I think we ought to be doing with No Child Left Behind.

Part of the very important feedback that I received is that teachers and principals welcome appropriate accountability for Federal education funding. Teachers and administrators don't want to do away with accountability. What they are concerned about is having appropriate accountability.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about title I, and I know some of my colleagues have mentioned this before. Title I of No Child Left Behind, or the ESEA Act as it used to be called, is the largest single grant program in the U.S. Department of Education. It has been around since 1965. But between 1965 and 2002, American taxpayers funded almost \$200 billion through title I spending with little or no discernible effect in improving the educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, which was the original intent of the law.

I think most of us realize that it is not just funding that improves academic performance or gets anything out of programs. But, many of the Federal programs and regulations have simply not improved the performance of disadvantaged children as a group.

My long-standing position has been, and continues to be, that the education of America's youth would be better served if Washington bureaucrats were removed from the equation. Control and accountability should be returned to local communities, where they can effectively make changes in the areas they know need it most.

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So I am disappointed in what looks like the direction that the majority is taking in Congress now, which is to eliminate much of the accountability that was put into No Child Left Behind, or the ESEA, when it was reauthorized in 2001, but simply put more funding into it. I think that is going in the wrong direction. We know that 9-year-olds have made more reading progress in the last 5 years than in the previous 28 years combined.

We can achieve excellence in education by encouraging the kind of accountability that promotes locally focused education and ultimately well educated young people. Parents, students and educators need more choices in the way No Child Left Behind is administered. The current my-way-or-the-highway approach to the Federal funding of education is broken, and imposing a top-down mechanism shortchanges millions of students and parents.

A good system will have more flexibility and will put the best decision makers in the driver's seat. Those are the parents and local educators who know what works best for students and should have the greater control and input.

We know in almost every program that a Federal Government one-size-fits-all approach does not work. It doesn't allow for tailor-made solutions to the unique situations facing school systems in every single district in America. What works in one State doesn't work in another one.

Reducing the role of the Federal Government makes sense for students who are not served by cookie-cutter policies promulgated by Washington bureaucrats.

There are many of us who believe that education is not the province of the Federal Government at all. However, we also know that efforts to remove the Federal Government from education have not passed and they are not going to pass. So the best thing that we can do is to make sure that we have accountability for the money that is spent in education, as we should have accountability in every program that takes Federal dollars.

Mr. Ranking Member, I am going to yield back to you.

Mr. McKEON. Thank you very much, and I would like to yield now to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the ranking member for all of your work in the area of education.

I think the chart at my left points out the dilemma that the previous